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Note verbale dated 10 December 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to transmit to the Economic and Social Council the text of the letter of the Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia, Davit Darakhvelidze, dated 2 December 2013 addressed to the Secretary-General (see annex).

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 10 December 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With the present letter, on behalf of the Government of Georgia, I would like to express willingness to become a member of the Executive Committee of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). We believe that Georgia meets the criteria for membership established by the relevant General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions.

As you are well aware, currently there are 272,000 internally displaced persons in my country, which amount to about 90,000 internally displaced families from the occupied regions of Georgia — Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia — as a result of the conflicts during 1991-1993 and the Russia-Georgia war of August 2008. Unfortunately, despite the best of our joint endeavours and the continuous efforts of the Government of Georgia, an impressive number of internally displaced persons still live in dire conditions of emotional, psychological and financial hardship.

In addition to the internally displaced persons, Georgia has refugees from Chechnya (Russian Federation) and has received an influx of refugees from other countries, especially as a result of the latest developments in Syria and Egypt. Consequently, the number of refugees and asylum seekers has become 10 times greater than before and reached about 1,000 persons. Georgia's borders remain open to asylum seekers who have fled from countries where massive human rights violations have taken place.

The new Government of Georgia resulting from the elections of 1 October 2012 pledged to internally displaced persons and refugees that it will work to resolve their problems in accordance with international standards concerning internally displaced persons and refugee protection. Georgia remains strongly committed to developing the most effective mechanisms in compliance with international standards for respecting the rights of internally displaced persons, refugees and stateless persons. Georgia intends to accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness by the end of 2013.

Serious efforts have been undertaken to improve the legislative basis with regard to refugees. Owing to the fact that the Law of Georgia on Refugees was not in compliance with the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, a draft law on refugees and humanitarian status was elaborated by the Ministry in line with international standards and conventions. The draft law was adopted by the parliament on 6 December 2011.

Considering that 6 of every 100 Georgians are internally displaced persons and out of respect for the international protection regime for refugees and stateless persons, Georgia herewith wishes to announce that it intends to apply for membership in the UNHCR Executive Committee.

Georgia remains dedicated to strengthening its strategic cooperation with UNHCR and the international community for the purpose of resolving protracted problems related to internal displacement in Georgia and contribute to the solution of problems of internally displaced persons, refugees and stateless persons worldwide.

(*Signed*) Davit **Darakhvelidze**